Foreign Trade Position

1661. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's foreign trade position has shown a significant improvement during the 1985-86, especially in exports;

(b) if so, to what extent the situation has improved resulting in a decline in the balance of trade deficit; and

(c) what are the main contributory factors for the same and the steps taken by Government to further improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) to (c) The provisional figures of India's foreign trade during 1985-86 (updated upto December, 1986) place exports at Rs. 11011.96 crores which were 6.2 per cent lower than the export figures of Rs. 11743.68 crores in the year 1984-85. At the same time India's imports during 1985 86 at Rs. 19759.43 crores were 15.3 per cent higher as compared with the level of Rs. 17134.20 crores during 1984-85. As a result India's balance of trade deficit increased from Rs. 5390.52 crores during 1984-85 to Rs. 8747.47 crores in 1985-86. Apart from the international economic sitiuation; an important factor contributing to the decline in overall exports during 1985-86 was the virtual stoppage of exports of crude oil. While export of crude oil during 1985-86 was only Rs. 135.15 crores it amounted to Rs. 1563.16 crores during 1984-85. The provisional export data revealed that non-crude oil exports at Rs. 10876.81 crores in 1985 registered an increase of 6.8 per cent as compared to Rs. 10180.52 crores during 1984-85. Besides, for many of our important export commodities such as jute manufactures, tea, coffee, and marine products, there was a significant decline in the unit value realsation.

During the first nine months of the current fiscal year (1986-87) India's exports showed an increase of 17.3 per cent over the corresponding period of last year; and imports showed a marginal increase of 2.3 per cent. As a result, the trade deficit declined by Rs. 1000.45 crores during the first nine months of 1986-87 compared to the corresponding period of last year.

A series of initiatives have been taken by the Government to promote exports. These are designed to generate surpluses for exports to induce the production of goods contemporary in technology and competitive in prices and to make the exports profitable. Simultaneously the Government has also initiated a series of steps to promote efficient import substitution, particularly in the sphere of bulk imports.

Revamping of Export Promotion Councils

1662. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR:
SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether help has been sought from the Indian Institute of Management for revamping the working of Export Promotion Councils, now monopolised by IAS Officers who are totally unsuited and untrained for the jobs; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b) In order to make the Councils more result oriented, a meeting of the Chairmen of all the Export Promotion Councils was held in the first week of February, 1987. The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad has also been asked to undertake a study of the Working of the Export Promotion Councils to make them effective instruments of promoting exports.

Beedi Workers Welfare Fund

1663. SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of income and expenditure under the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund during the last three years, year-wise;